

## SPECIFICITY OF KARACHAY-BALKAR TOPONYMIC LEGENDS

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*At the intersection of folklore and geography, the author examines the epistemological potential of Karachay-Balkar toponymic legends, which reflect important information about the history of the people, migration, religious beliefs, features of spiritual and material culture. According to the thematic content, all toponymic legends are divided into four main groups; natural, anthropocentric, religious and based on a certain event. Natural are the legends that explain the geophysical characteristics of the object. Anthropocentric legends are associated with the name of a certain historical person, which is directly related to the creation of a cultural object. Religious ones reflect pagan, Christian or Muslim beliefs of the highlanders. Event toponymic legends, as a rule, tell about some remarkable incident, imprinted in the name of a natural or man-made object (rock, pass, bridge, ford, etc.). An important place in the article is given to the phenomenon of toponymic palimpsest, which means spontaneous or pragmatic renaming of toponymic units. All theoretical positions in the article are supported by illustrative material. In some cases, the author used materials from the personal archive.*

**Keywords:** Karachay-Balkar folklore, toponymy, legend, classification, natural, anthropocentric, theological, event, toponymic palimpsest, historical memory.

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